

# **GORGES STATE PARK**

# **GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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# INTRODUCTION

Planning is an essential element of effective and efficient park administration and management. The North Carolina General Assembly acknowledged its importance by passing state parks system legislation that includes planning requirements.

The 1987 State Parks Act (G.S.114-44.7 through 114-44.14) stipulates that a State Parks System Plan be prepared. The first plan was completed in December 1988. It evaluated the statewide significance of each park, identified duplications and deficiencies in the system, described the resources of the system, proposed solutions to problems, described anticipated trends, and recommended means and methods to accommodate trends. The most recent update of the Systemwide Plan was completed in December 2000.

The State Parks Act also requires each park to have an individual general management plan. The general management plans are required to:

*...include a statement of purpose for the park based upon its relationship to the System Plan and its classification. An analysis of the major resources and facilities on hand to achieve those purposes shall be completed along with a statement of management direction. The general management plan shall be revised as necessary to comply with the System Plan and to achieve the purpose of the [State Parks Act].*

The general management plan (GMP) is to be a comprehensive five-year plan of management for a park unit. A GMP's function is to:

1. Describe park resources and facilities;
2. State the purpose and importance of each park unit;
3. Outline interpretive themes and propose locations for informational and interpretive facilities;
4. Analyze park and recreation demands and trends in the park's service area;
5. Summarize the primary laws guiding park operations;
6. Identify internal and external threats to park natural and cultural resources, and propose appropriate responses;
7. Identify and set priorities for capital improvement needs;
8. Analyze visitor services and propose efficient, effective, and appropriate means of responding to visitor needs; and
9. Review park operations and identify actions to support efficient and effective park administrative procedures.

The GMP for Gorges State Park, developed with public involvement, is intended to serve these purposes.